



Pirate Pride

May 2022

www.mvsc.k12.in.us * 219-650-5300

The Newsletter of the Merrillville Community School Corporation

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

May 30

No School/Memorial Day

June 5

Class of 2022 Graduation

June 6

Last Day of School

June 20

No School/Juneteenth

July 4

No School/Independence Day

Aug. 17

Students' first day of school

Sept. 5

No School/Labor Day

Sept. 8

MHS Parent/Teacher
Conferences, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Sept. 29

Pierce Middle School
Parent/Teacher Conferences
3:30-6:30 p.m.

Cops engage students in pilot program

Merrillville intermediate and elementary schools and some special community representatives have been participating in a pilot program over the past two months.

The Adopt-A-Cop program has introduced police into the schools to help build positive community relationships and gain an increased understanding of the role of police officers in serving the community.

Each of the five elementary schools and MIS has an officer assigned to the buildings with a set schedule, and those officers participate in daily activities, engaging directly with students.

Sometimes the officers participate in gym class; other times the officers read books to students. Still other activities in which the officers participate include art

class, music, recess, lunchtime, welcoming students to school, and more.

"The goal of the Adopt-a-Cop program is to provide our officers and students with experiences that create opportunities for building positive relationships," said Dr. Danny Lackey, executive director of Student Support Services. "So often, the narratives that circulate on social media are not necessarily accurate, full or complete representations of who we are as a community.

"This project makes visible how engaging experiences can feed the human soul; like sharing a smile, engaging in laughter, and making valued connections," Dr. Lackey continued. "Simply

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Summer 2022

Summer Boost Program, FREE summer meals, Book Bus schedule, reading raffles, makerspace activities and more!

Find out what's happening with your schools this summer, pages 12-13.

Last day for online kindergarten preregistration is May 30

Online kindergarten preregistration continues through May 30.

Parents with children ages 5 either on or before Aug. 1, can preregister by

visiting the corporation website www.mvsc.k12.in.us and entering the requested information. The last day for kindergarten preregistration is May 30.

Once parents preregister their children online, school staff will contact parents to schedule an appointment to come in and complete the registration process.

In order to attend Merrillville

schools, families must live within the boundaries of Ross Township, which includes Merrillville and portions of Hobart and Crown Point.

Information on registering children older than kindergarten age is available on the school corporation website.

For more information, call 219-650-5300.



Applications for free/reduced lunch/textbook program will expire September 28

Parents whose children are on the free and reduced lunch and textbook program can reapply to participate in the 2022-23 school year beginning July 1.

Applications currently on file will expire Sept. 28.

The USDA may instruct schools to begin charging for meals. Parents who apply can also take advantage of reduced textbook fees in addition to other benefits that may be offered by state or federal programs, like [P-EBT](#) and the [broadband benefit](#).

You can reapply using any of

these convenient methods:

- During the Verification of Information process that will begin sometime in July;
- Apply online using Skyward;
- Download an application from the website to complete and mail or bring it to the central office;
- Visit your schools or the corporation's central office during office hours to obtain a form to complete. The office is located at 6701 Delaware St.

BOARD OF SCHOOL TRUSTEES

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SUPERINTENDENT

Nicholas G. Brown, Ed.S.

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of Pirate Pride. If you have story ideas, questions or comments, please contact the Corporation's Public Information Officer at dstuckert@mvsc.k12.in.us or 219-650-5477.

2022-23 reenrollment process begins in July

If you have students returning next school year, you will receive an email in July requesting you to verify your information online as a form of enrollment for the 2022-23 school year.

After receiving the email, all parents are requested to log into their accounts using Skyward Parent Access login and password to complete the verification of information process.

The information you provide is used to update school records, provide a safe environment for children and confirm enrollment, so it is important that it is current.

It is best to complete this Verification of Information process on a tablet, laptop or desktop. If you use a cell phone to access the Internet or just need a computer on which to complete this process, please feel free stop in at the Merrillville Community School Corporation Central Office during business hours, where you can use one of our available computers.

The office is located at 6701 Delaware St. across from MHS.

Merrillville families with a change of address or incorrect address listed in Skyward Parent Access must visit their children's schools with verification of address. Families whose children attend multiple schools can simply visit the school of the oldest student.

Address verification items include driver's licenses, utility bills, mortgage statements or leases. For additional information regarding acceptable proofs of residency, parents can call their children's schools or visit the school website.

All school bus information for Merrillville Community School Corporation is based on the addresses listed in Skyward Family Access.

For more information, call the Merrillville Community School Corporation, 219-650-5300.



Merrillville High School



CLASS OF 2022

TOP 10 GRADUATES



Vincent Feliciano
Valedictorian



Aidan McLaughlin
Salutatorian



Austen Short



Peter Wujek



Jonas Langer



Kiersten Stowe



Leah Peloza



Thomas Snowden



Merci Tan



Brice Sanford

Happy Retirement!

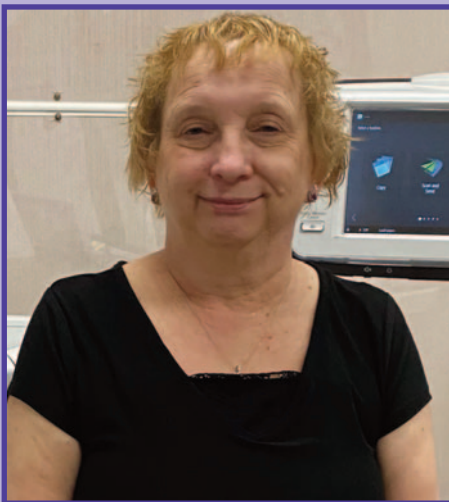
Sandra Scholtens 24 Years

After 24 years at Merrillville Community School Corporation, Sandra Scholtens, teacher's aide at MHS, is setting her sights on a more leisurely life.

Mrs. Scholtens has been at the high school for 20 years, but started at MIS, where she spent her first four years.

Her favorite memory is working with wonderful staff and making long-time friends

"It has been great working with the people at MHS, having a job that I like and learning new things," said Mrs. Scholtens. "If you need a hug when things are not going to good, there is always someone to lend a hand and a hug and a great big smile. I will miss it but, this is a new chapter of my life I will enjoy also."



Sandra Scholtens

She plans to spend some of her new-found free time camping and spending a lot of time with her family and her grandkids.

Peg Sanchez 24 Years



Peg Sanchez

Peg Sanchez has plans to "read, read, read, read on a beach, at a library, on her porch" when she retires.

She's been with the school corporation for 24 years as a third-grade teacher at Miller Elementary School, and she subbed for 12 years at all of the schools before being hired!

She said her favorite memories are of the students.

Her parting message to everyone: "Keep wondering; ask lots of questions; be relentless in your search for the answers; follow the science; learn from your mistakes. 'Those who can, do. Those who can do MORE, teach!'"

Bridget Hamang Gates 36 Years

This MHS alumna has been teaching for John Wood School 35 out of the 36 years she's been with Merrillville Community School Corporation.

"Teaching for the corporation that I graduated from has been amazing," said Bridget Hamang Gates. "I have truly enjoyed all the wonderful staff members I have worked with over the 36 years."

She has taught first, second, fifth, and sixth grades and Title 1 Reading.

Her future plans include traveling with her husband, starting with a retirement trip to Vegas, going to Massachusetts then Maine in the fall, planning her son's wedding in July 2023, and just enjoying what life has to offer.

"Remember that each day is a new



Bridget Hamang Gates

day, and if you love what you do, you will never work a day in your life," Mrs. Gates said.

*Once a
Pirate,
Always a
Pirate!*

Cheryl Austin 10 Years

This retiree-to-be has a one-way ticket to Las Vegas on July 1!

Cheryl Austin purchased her dream retirement home in Henderson, Nevada, where she'll be in a 55+ community and close to a few dear family members who moved to Nevada more than 20 years ago.

"I've obtained my Nevada educator license, so I can work part-time (only if I want to!) as a substitute teacher if I feel the calling to do so," Ms. Austin said. "With great weather (no more snow days!), family, and great entertainment, I'm very excited about this new chapter in my life!"

She will celebrate her second retirement. Ms. Austin transitioned into teaching at MHS after retiring from a 33-year career in the food industry, where she worked as a scientist and technical manager.

During her career at MHS, she's taught biology, human services, and nutrition science careers.

"I've also been an active participant in sponsoring clubs and classes, and most recently spent 4.5 years as a co-sponsor of Student Government," Ms. Austin said. "I'm also very passionate about the Merrillville Classroom Teachers Association, so I've been an active member of our teacher union for as long as I've been in the District."

Her cherished memories here at the school corporation actually began before she started working here.

"I was an active parent in the district before becoming a teacher," she said. "My daughters Aly (MHS 2011) and Megan (MHS 2014) are successful products of MHS, so I have many fond family memories of our experiences together at MHS."

"Building relationships with students and staff have been memories that will



Cheryl Austin

stay with me forever," Ms. Austin continued. "I was so blessed to be mentored by great teachers when I started at MHS, which was the beginning of my teaching career. Being involved with MCTA and clubs broadened my opportunities to establish great friendships with staff that I would not have had the opportunity to do had I not

been active in activities outside of the classroom."

She has a couple of parting messages she wanted to share. To students:

"Please take advantage of the many opportunities that are available to you at MHS. You'll never know what your true passion might be if you don't try different things. Never be afraid to push your comfort zone! Remember, success does not happen without hard work. You'll define for yourself what 'success' looks like for you; just keep working hard and you'll achieve all those goals that you've set for yourself!"

To her MCTA brothers and sisters: "It has been an honor and a privilege to be a part of this 'family.' I've enjoyed getting to know so many of you and advocating on your behalf at the local, district and state levels. Keep up the good fight!! I'll be pulling for you!"



Tina Detterline 23 Years



Tina Detterline and Avery

As a new grandparent, Tina Detterline is looking forward to the next chapter of her life after her 23-year career with Merrillville Community School Corporation.

Her granddaughter Avery Elizabeth was born last month! Her future plans include babysitting the new arrival.

Mrs. Detterline has been a secretary at Fieler Elementary School for the last five years after spending 12 years as a secretary at MIS and six years as a cafeteria aide and detention aide at Pierce Middle School.

She said she will always remember working with great people.

"Best of luck to everyone! I will miss you all!" she said.

We will miss you!

Dr. Danny Lackey **24 Years**

"First of all, I plan on taking some time to 'stand still,' listen, rest, rejuvenate and be mindful of my physical, emotional and spiritual needs," said Dr. Danny Lackey, Ed.D., of his retirement plans. "Afterwards, I will explore how I can continue to make a difference in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion."

Dr. Lackey served in a few different capacities at the Merrillville Community School Corporation during his 24-year career: Pierce guidance counselor, MHS guidance counselor, diversity coordinator for the district, director of diversity and student support services, and most recently executive director of student support services in the corporation's central office.

"My most fond memory of working at MCSC was when I was the sponsor of the S.T.A.N.D. Clubs at Pierce and at MHS," Dr. Lackey said. "It gave me the greatest joy because it allowed me to provide a safe space for kids to discover their abil-



Dr. Danny Lackey, Ed.D

ity to lead and serve, especially in the areas of community service and social justice."

He shares a parting message to the school community: "I would like to say that the time that we have with students is precious, and that everything that we say and do with students is having an impact; sometimes in ways that we are unaware of."



Charles Seligman

Thomas Sweet **10 Years**



Thomas Sweet

High school custodian/assistant head custodian Thomas Sweet said his retirement plans include resting, doing things around the house, and starting a small antique business.

He said he'll always remember those days he'd arrive early to snow plow and salt during the winter months to keep students and staff safe.

"It is something not fun, but it just sticks in my memory," Mr. Sweet said.

"It has been a pleasure meeting and working with all of the custodians and staff," he continued. "They have made working here very interesting, keeping the days different but the same. This way it never became boring. Thanks, everyone!"

Charles Seligman **19 Years**

Mr. Seligman will retire to his "little slice of heaven" in Clermont, Florida, after 19 years of teaching MHS subjects like math, CTE, government, economics, and credit recovery. His favorite memories are of when students were kind to their fellow students.

His parting message to everyone: "Follow your dreams; you can do anything you want as long as you are willing to put in the time and effort required!"

Cops engage students in Adopt-A-Cop pilot program

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put, when authentic/social interactions are made, we are able to see each other's humanity."

To appropriately introduce the officers to the students, posters of them with a few details of who they are were placed in every classroom, and students were able to ask questions that the officers had the opportunity to answer on video.

"I am grateful to be here to get to know you guys and let you all have a little more insight to what a police officer's life is about," said Merrillville Police Sgt. Gerald Croarkin in his video to Iddings Elementary School students. "I hope you find us to be humans and people just like you and your mom and dad."

"Right now, not a lot of people like the police," said Officer Taylor Hensley in her video to Fieler Elementary School students. "I do my best to make sure that when I interact with people, they have a good inter-

action with me so that maybe they will start liking the police more."

To measure the program's impact, students completed a brief pre-survey, and they will be asked to complete a post survey. Teachers will record student comments and also complete impact surveys.

"I've been getting feedback from some of the officers involved, and they're absolutely loving it," said Merrillville Assistant Police Chief Konstantino Nuses.

"Completely not what they expected. Hoping to continue moving forward."



Above: Police Sgt. Gerald Croarkin gets a warm welcome when kindergarteners arrive for gym class at Iddings Elementary School; below: Sgt. David DeSalle plays a game of tic tac toe with intermediate students at lunch.

Right: Officer Taylor Hensley is ready for a game of Memory with Fieler Elementary School kindergarteners.



Officer Terrance Bronowski reads to Wood Elementary School students during National Library Week.



JOIN US!

MHS PERFORMING ARTS

Upcoming Shows

SPRING BAND CONCERT

Featuring Pierce Middle School and MHS bands

May 10, 6:30 p.m. Tickets \$8

*\$4 for seniors and students;
under 8 FREE; MCSC staff/students FREE w/ID*



CHORAL SHOWCASE

**CINEMAGIC: Celebrating Hollywood's
best movie music**

May 19, 7:30 p.m. Tickets \$6

SPRING STRINGS

Featuring MIS, Pierce, and MHS orchestras

Two concerts May 12, Tickets at the door \$6

\$4 for seniors and students; under 8 FREE; MCSC staff/students FREE w/ID

6:30 p.m.: MIS 6th Grade, Pierce 7th Grade, MHS Beginning & Advanced

8:15 p.m.: Pierce 8th Grade, MHS Intermediate & Advanced



MHS ONE ACT FESTIVAL

May 26 & 27, 6 p.m.; Tickets \$3
located in the MHS Small Theatre

(enter through the corridor between Doors L & M)

*View the final productions of advanced theatre students,
who are 100% responsible for every aspect of their productions.
Same productions each night.*

**Unless otherwise specified, performances in Reinhart Auditorium,
located through Door M of Merrillville High School, 276 E. 68th Pl.**



Jazz Ensemble earns top prize

The MHS Jazz Ensemble, under the direction of Mark Danielson, earned Gold at the ISSMA State Jazz Festival.

The band performed three songs: "Hey, Big Spender," "Here's that Rainy Day," and "Malaguena."

Junior Allen Evans and Senior Joseph Sleweon also earned Outstanding Solo Awards for their improvised solo renditions in the piece "Malaguena." (Photos courtesy MHS yearbook)

MHS artist wins state award

Junior Caleb Jones was a Regional Winner of the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis Juried Exhibition of Student Art with his artwork titled "Sundrop," a graphic design.

MHS art students participated in the competition held in conjunction with the 11th Quadrennial Violin Competition. Over 20,000 students throughout the state were registered to participate.

On April 1, over 800 submitted works were judged in the five Regional Groups by a panel of three judges who represented elementary, middle school, and Jr/Sr High School levels.

They saw only the artworks themselves--not the teacher name, student name or school name. In each Region, 30 winners were named (five for each Exhibition Level). Regional Winners received a check for \$25 and Certificate of Merit at the Gala Awards Ceremony on May 1 at Indiana Landmarks in Indianapolis.



"Sundrop," a graphic design

ISSMA HONORS

The beginning, intermediate and advanced orchestras competed at ISSMA for the first time in two years! Each group achieved Silver ratings, but were mere points away from Gold!!



Winter sports winners celebrated at awards event

Scholar Award Winners (3.5 GPA or higher)

Girls' Basketball

SaMya Miller - 12
Alanna Sabbath - 12
Trinity Allen - 11
Sincere Peterson - 11
Kennedie Burks - 10
Jaela Lynon - 10
Essence Mobley - 9
Alani Roche' - 9
Kylie Wells - 9

Girls' Swimming & Diving

Noelia Arichavala - 12
Kionna Rodgers - 12
Hannah Robinson - 11
Savannah Cantrell - 10
Daisy Garcia - 10
Kahlari Stipe - 10
Alexa Wright - 10

Boys' Swimming & Diving

Benzi Corrales - 12
Matthew Sahagun - 12
Jacob Cruz - 9

Cheerleading

Aleksander Djukic - 11
Breonna Jordan - 11
Jariah Runde - 11
Londyn Williams - 9

Gymnastics

Katie Hyland - 12
Emily Jimenez - 12
Emilee Thomas - 11
Kamyra Williams - 11
Caidyn Morgan - 10
Alexandra Rodriguez - 10

Wrestling

Caleb Carter - 12
David Maldonado - 11
Matthew Maldonado - 10
Leah Peloza - 12
Leila Castro - 10
Anaia Williams-Hayward - 9
Katelyn Bell-Logan - 9

Trainers

Rayonna Grady - 12



Scholar Award Recipients

Six Letter Plaque Awards

Benzi Corrales (12)

Tennis 10-12, Swimming 10-12

Angel Nelson (12)

Football 10-12, Basketball 11-12, Baseball 10

Branee Bradley (11)

Fall Cheer 9-11, Winter Cheer 9-11

Irelin Fulton (11)

Fall Cheer 9-11, Winter Cheer 9-11

David Maldonado (11)

Soccer 9-11, Wrestling 9-11

Taylor O'Hara (11)

Fall Cheer 9-11, Winter Cheer 9-11



Wrestling

Left from left: Most Improved - Lucas Clement; Sportsmanship - Caleb Carter; Leadership - Theodore Sparks; MVP - David Maldonado.

Boys' Swim/Dive

Right from left: MVP - Kamryn Outlar; Most Improved - Anthony Patton; Sportsmanship - Anthony Cruz; Leadership - Desmond Winters.



cont'd next page

Winter sports winners celebrated at awards event

from previous page

**GO
PIRATES!**



Basketball

Left from left: Most Improved - Lavonta Ash; Best Mental Attitude - Jeremiah Roberts; Leadership - Jaeden Williams; MVP - Erickson Gibson.

Below from left: Sportsmanship - Alanna Sabbath; and MVP & Leadership Awards - Davina Smith; not pictured Most Improved - Teresa Leavy.



Gymnastics

Above from left: Most Improved - Nina Marshall; Leadership - Emily Jimenez; MVP & Best Mental Attitude - Caidyn Morgan.



Cheer

Above from left: Sportsmanship - Jariah Runde; Most Improved - Jada Lumpkin; not pictured MVP - Devyn Walters and Leadership - Taylor Jackson.



Girls' Swim/Dive

Above from left: MVP - Ciara Watson; Most Improved - Kahlari Stipe; Leadership - Alexa Wright; not pictured Sportsmanship - Hannah Robinson.

Summer program continues focus to 'BOOST' learning

The Merrillville Community School Corporation will again use dollars from the U.S. Department of Education's Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund in different ways to provide students with needed support to help bridge any learning gaps and emotional challenges resulting from the pandemic.

School administration has outlined its second Summer Boost program. This year, the five-week skill-aligned summer experience will focus on a small group of students per instructor to help close any learning gaps that may have occurred due to the pandemic.

The Boost program will provide differentiated instruction to qualified students to address their academic needs in the areas of English Language Arts/Reading and/or Math.

Students entering grades three through eight were invited to participate four days a week from 8 to 11:30 a.m.,

and the ratio of students to instructor will be 7-to-1. Invitations were based on ILEARN test data, IREAD test data and district assessments. Transportation will be provided.

Funding will also support resources to address social and emotional needs of students and staff, like hiring social workers and offering additional assistance programs on mental health.



Summer Boost 2021

GO, PIRATES!

Breakfast & Lunches are FREE during summer

All children ages 18 and under are invited to receive FREE breakfasts and lunches every day from June 8 through Aug. 10; no meals on June 20 and July 4.

Children must be present and eat their meals on site.

Breakfast will be served from 9 to 10 a.m.; lunch from noon to 1 p.m. **Meals will be distributed at the following sites:**

- Merrillville High School, 276 E. 68th Pl., Door I
- Pierce Middle School, 199 E. 70th St., west of Door 3
- Fieler Elementary School, 407 W. 61st Ave., Door C
- Salk Elementary School, 3001 W. 77th Ave., Door B
- Miller Elementary School, 5901 Waite St.
- Stefek Park, 70th & Harrison St.
- Collins Park, 9500 Merrillville Rd.

Mobile Bus Stops-Lunch Only

- 11-11:20 a.m. Emmanuel Lutheran Church parking lot, 5375 Harrison
- 11:40-11:50 a.m. 73rd & Bigger St., along curb
- Noon-12:20 p.m. ReThink Church parking lot, 2920 W. 73rd



Summer Reading Camp 2021



SUMMER 2022 Book Bus Schedule

June 13-July 29, 11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
(closed June 20 & July 4)

Checkout books, code, try makerspace activities, listen to read alouds!
Receive a free book PK-12th grades, while supplies last.

Mondays	Tuesdays	Wednesdays	Thursdays	Fridays
Salk area	Miller area	Wood area	Iddings area	Fieler area

Relax with a good book this summer

What better way to relax this summer than with a good book?

Students, each time you finish a book enter the MCSC Libraries raffle to win prizes throughout the summer. There will be smaller prizes available weekly and larger prizes announced on:

- **Friday, June 10**
- **Monday, July 8**
- **Friday, Aug. 12**

Visit our Google site to learn more about summer reading:



Google Classroom Read Alouds

Monday-Thursday, 10:45 - 11:15 a.m.

Starts Monday, June 13 for K-4th graders

Join our summer library Google Classroom for some fun read aloud stories shared by the book bus library staff. Be on the lookout for some special guest readers! Students can share what they are reading and will be allowed to talk about their favorite books as time allows.



Makerspace Activities

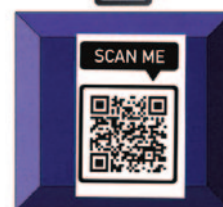
Interested in more opportunities to do makerspace activities? Stop by the MHS Freshman Center Library during summer school hours for different activities each week.

MHS Freshman Center Library
June 13 – July 22, 7:10 a.m.-12:20 p.m.
(Not open June 20th or July 4th)

For more information please visit www.mvsc.k12.in.us/media
or call the Library Media Services Office 219-650-5386.



Follow us on
social media!



Join us! It's gonna be

E.P.I.C.!

(Empowering Parents In our Community)

FREE Parent Resource Fair

Thursday, May 12, 6-8 p.m.

**Dean & Barbara White
Community Center**

6600 Broadway, Merrillville

Sponsored by the
**Merrillville Community School Corporation &
The Dean and Barbara White Community Center**

Visit with vendors and discover and learn about resources that will support your family and engage your children during the summer months. Vendors and resources will include:

- Health & community resources
- Summer recreation/educational camps
- Summer reading enrichment
- Tutoring resource services
- Youth empowerment resources
- Social services

**Stop in and enjoy food,
music and raffles!!!**

For more information, visit the school corporation website, www.mvsc.k12.in.us.



PTO wants YOU!!

What is the PTO Parent-Teacher Organization?

Our schools' PTOs are parents, teachers and staff coming together to play an active role in our children's educational experiences.

There are opportunities to participate at every level of our schools' PTOs:

- Take a primary role as an officer such as president, vice president, recording secretary, communications secretary and treasurer;
- Lead or participate in a standing committee.
- Find an engagement level that best suits your talents and time.

The advantages of being a part of PTO include:

- Know what's happening in your schools
- A path to suggest change
- Meet other parents
- Get to know teachers and school staff
- Grow as a volunteer, using your skills and talents to support building improvements through fund-raising, programs, social and family events
- And most of all, be a role model for your child.



PTOs enhance the school environments and learning experiences for children, helping to provide that foundation for students to grow and thrive.

The PTO is a team effort in which we cannot succeed without you!

If you haven't been involved in the PTO, it's never too late to start. Simply contact the school that your child attends to get more information.

Pledge to make the 2022-23 school year YOUR year to be more involved and make a difference in your child's life as well as hundreds of others attending Merrillville schools.

Iddings secretary takes going 'above & beyond' seriously

Lia Hasier, secretary to the principal at Iddings Elementary School, won the "Above and Beyond" award at the Secretaries Conference sponsored by Indiana Association of School Principals.

Mrs. Hasier was nominated for the award by her building administrators, Principal Michelle Coughlin and Assistant Principal Christine Waugh, who said she goes above and beyond for the staff and students of Iddings Elementary School.

When one member of the office team was off for an extended leave, administrators said Mrs. Hasier stepped up to learn other aspects of the office in order to fill the void. While others also assisted in the office, Mrs. Hasier kept the office running smoothly.

"She quickly learned the aspects of the other team member's job and was always willing to work extra hours to make sure the office tasks were completed," said Mrs. Coughlin.

Mrs. Hasier volunteers to work with students when she is on her lunch hour or has a short break. The school has a social-emotional initiative with a check-in, check-out component. Students visit their mentor at the start of the day to receive



Lia Hasier was recognized for her efforts in helping students as well as handling her secretarial duties at Iddings Elementary School.

positive words of encouragement in order to start the day on the right note. They then visit the mentor at the end of the day to review how the day went.

Mrs. Hasier has mentored numerous students and has formed strong relationships with many of them.

Most recently, she has volunteered to review sight words with some

first graders.

"Lia truly believes that her position in the school is not just about answering telephone calls and tracking attendance," said Mrs. Coughlin. "She genuinely cares about the students and wants to make a difference."

The school established a "One Book, One School" initiative last fall. Children were given the same book and encouraged to read the daily assignments at home.

"As administrators, we realized that some students would not have an adult at home in the evening to participate in this book," said Mrs. Waugh. "We decided to video record the chapters so all students could participate. If a child did not have an adult with whom to read, he or she could watch the Zoom video of the assigned chapter."

Mrs. Hasier's husband works for the Merrillville Fire Department, so she reached out to the firefighters to have special guest readers for the Zoom readings.

For Fire Safety Month, students were not able to visit the fire station due to COVID-19. Mrs. Hasier used her connection to the local fire department again to create fire safety videos for the children.

"These videos brought the fire station to our students," said Mrs. Waugh. "Because the videos were so well done and offered such an important message, the principal shared these videos with the other elementary schools."

When the school corporation hosted a districtwide professional development day last November, an Idding's teacher recommended Mrs. Hasier's inspirational workouts be added to the lineup.

Mrs. Hasier offered two one-hour sessions to district staff that were well attended. She shared her one-hour inspirational HIIT workouts that featured motivational breaks. All of the reviews were overwhelmingly positive, and Iddings administrators have already requested that she present to their staff in the future.

PIRATE PRIDE!

MERRILLVILLE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL'S
11th Annual Golf Outing
 Sunday, July 24, 2022



Thank you for your support!
 For more information or to sign up Contact:
 Brad Seiss
 bseiss@mvschools.org



Duck Creek G.C.
 \$75/person
 Shotgun Start Time 9:00AM
 Lunch/Raffle



Students complete brand-new Human & Social Services Pathway

Merrillville High School has added another way for students to satisfy their graduation requirements while equipping them with employability skills.

The school completed its Human and Social Services (HSS) Pathway with the addition of a brand-new work-based learning course. This will be the first year that any juniors or seniors will be able to complete this pathway.

Cheryl Austin, MHS educator and creator of the program, said the Indiana Department of Education has designated this pathway as a “high value” need with regard to available jobs now and into the future.

“My hope is that students will be inspired to pursue careers within this pathway if they want to realize the joy that results while serving others,” Ms. Austin said. “It is not the highest paying field, but if students are passionate about helping others and serving communities, this may be the pathway for them!”

“Sometimes students learn this is *not* the pathway for them; that is OK, too,” she continued. “It’s better to learn that in high school than get a four-year college degree in something they are really not interested in pursuing as a career.”

The pathway is made up of two



From left: MHS seniors Saniya Spalding and Amaria Hardaway and junior Miracle Roussell work on event details for the Food Bank of Northwest Indiana’s volunteer celebration. The students are completing requirements to complete the school’s brand-new pathway.

courses that are each two trimesters in length. Ms. Austin said she has taught the first course of HSS at MHS for about four years in addition to her primary role of teaching biology.

This course, Human Services I, focuses on employability skills such as leadership, communication, problem solving, etc., to prepare students for the new work-based learning experiences.

“This year the program has grown significantly, so I’m only teaching human and social services now,” she added.

Seven interns are currently getting on-the-job experience to satisfy the requirements for Human Services II.

Ms. Austin said she networked extensively within the community to identify employer partners that would be open to mentoring interns within the human services field.

“We are so fortunate to have many businesses within Merrillville whose

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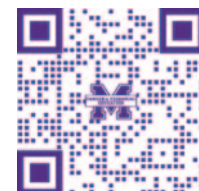


Building strong healthcare professionals for tomorrow

MHS senior, currently also known as the future physician Arturo Baranda, plans to attend the Valparaiso University pre-med program. He has not yet identified a specialty.

Through the MHS CNA program, Arturo had the opportunity to shadow Dr. Stepanovic, a cardiologist with over 30 years experience. His shadowing experience consisted of rounding on patients on the hospital floors and seeing patients in the office.

Find out more about this program and other CTE programs:



PTO Movie Nights!



PTOs at Wood Elementary School (above) and Fieler Elementary School (right) invited families to movie nights. Parents and children enjoyed movies and snacks and had great fun with each other! What is your PTO planning next?



Students complete brand-new Human & Social Services Pathway

from previous page

mission is focused on serving people, so we were able to find two wonderful partners that were willing and able to take on and mentor our interns: The Food Bank of Northwest Indiana and the Dean and Barbara White Community Center,” Austin said. “Since both are so close to MHS, it is a great fit for our students.”

“Ms. Austin has provided a rewarding opportunity for our students to be embedded in their community and experience what it is like to give back and ‘do good’ for others,” said Bob Phelps, director of Career and Technical Education for Merrillville Community School Corporation.

Some of the tasks that interns accomplished at these locations included mail merges and donor mailings, preparations for the National Volunteer Week celebration, graphics, program planning and creation, and staff scheduling.

“I feel very close to the interns, since I had them in class last year for level one and two class periods a day in trimesters two and three,” Ms. Austin said. “They are doing a great job of representing MHS and the CTE program out in the field.

“I’m very proud of them,” she continued. “If I’ve been able to contribute to their growth and development in a positive way, I’m happy!”

In preparation for their work-based learning this trimester, the first half of the class guided students through skills like preparing cover letters, resumes, five-year plans and more to develop their portfolios.

The students also participated in group interviews, one with each employer, before they were assigned to their first job location.

Interns can use their experience to help prepare them for career paths in personal care services, family and community services, consumer services, counseling and mental health, and early childhood development and services.

Examples of the careers for which they can use their new knowledge and training as foundation include case managers, community outreach workers, social workers, family court advocates, counselors, child advocates, and emergency services managers.

The curriculum for this program, which also requires students to serve 10 hours of volunteer work, was modeled after a previous internship course taught

by Ms. Austin’s mentor, now retired MHS educator Sharon Row.

“As a CTE educator who transitioned into teaching from a successful technical and managerial career, I am very passionate about helping students learn ‘real world’ skills, so I was very motivated to establish this program for our Human and Social Services students,” Ms. Austin said.

After launching the internship program for the first time this year, Ms. Austin will be leaving the school to enjoy retirement.

“I am very proud of the program that I am leaving behind for another capable educator to carry on and build upon what has been started this year,” she said.

As Merrillville transitions this pathway to the state’s Next Level Program of Study, they will incorporate courses on understanding diversity, relationships, and emotions.

“Ms. Austin has laid a strong foundation for a pathway that will serve students pursuing human and social services,” said Mr. Phelps. “We anticipate that as these students transition into adulthood, they will have a positive impact on their communities for many years.”

Middle school student wins top prize in state essay contest

A Pierce Middle School student won the top prize of \$500 in the junior division of a state essay contest.

Eighth grader Mya Reed placed first in the sixth through eighth grade group of the 2022 Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest.

The competition was sponsored by the Indiana Association of School Principals and Ball State University. Faculty members from the university evaluated more than 220 essay submissions from students across the state in grades six through 12.

"It is no surprise Mya's essay stood out from the rest," said Pierce U.S. History Teacher Heather Walker. "She is a shining star that brings light and positivity to our world, overshadowing any darkness that might stand in her way."

Ms. Walker said Mya is an outstanding student and leader for her peers; she

is currently the president of the school's student council.

"Her wisdom supersedes her years, and her kindness will leave a lasting effect for years to come," Walker added.

"Mya is a true treasure! I would be hard pressed to find one adult in this building that doesn't know Mya by name," Pierce Principal Lafonda Morris added. "Mya is quick to think outside the box and never allows any grass to grow



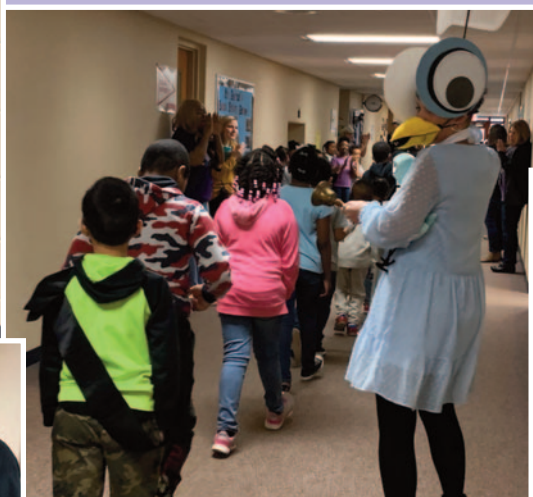
Mya Reed

under her feet."

Students were asked to write a 500-word essay based on the MLK quote "Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, and toughness multiplies toughness in a descending spiral of destruction."

Pierce Eighth Grade English Teacher Patrice Weil talked about Reed's work, "The essay was titled 'A Descending Spiral of Destruction' and the first line of the essay is particularly powerful; it reads, 'Just as all threads of a tapestry are imperative or every hue on a canvas is crucial, we are all equally important to the beauty and progression of the masterpiece called history.'"

Student of the Month fun and parade at Salk Elementary School



Students and staff dress as their favorite book characters and celebrate students' achievements.
GO PIRATES!



Merrillville girls rock the recognition at local conference

Several Merrillville students were recognized at the recent All Girls Rock Conference and awards, a weekend event sponsored by Feed My Sheep Resource Center, Inc., a 501c3 not-for-profit organization.

The second day awards celebration was designed to honor and recognize young girls between the ages of 9-18 throughout Northwest Indiana and the surrounding area who have excelled or shown outstanding achievement in various categories and who have demonstrated characteristics of a true role model to other girls.

Girls were nominated by schools, churches, individuals, and organizations throughout NWI to participate, and awards were presented in the categories of visual arts, literary arts, creative fine arts, academics, sports, community service and leadership.

Merrillville students who were recognized included:

10th Grade

Kaitlyn Harris - Athletics/Sports

Eighth Grade

Deja Wilson - Creative Fine Arts Award

Jamya Crockett - Creative Fine Arts

Mya Reed - Literary Arts;

Seventh Grade

Jasmine McGee - Visual Arts Award

Kimora Newman - Academics Award

Sixth Grade

Trinity Thomas - Community Service Award

The first day of the two-day event was filled with workshops/topics based on the current environment and issues young girls face daily. Speakers were selected based on their knowledge and expertise of specific topics.

Two educators from Merrillville schools shared their knowledge with attendees and presented topics.

MHS Assistant Principal Candace Lillie shared the presentation "Healthy Relationships/Setting Boundaries," discussing the difference between healthy



From left: Deja Wilson; Jamya Crockett; Mya Reed; Ms. Smith, founder and CEO of Feed My Sheep Resource Center, Inc.; Jasmine McGee; Trinity Thomas; and Kimora Newman.

and unhealthy relationships and topics such as social media, peer pressure, character, self-confidence, decision-making, respect, bullying/gossiping, dating/violence, drugs/alcohol.

Pierce Middle School Educator Miranda Barber also presented the workshop "Potential, Purpose, Poise," discussing adolescents' barriers to finding their identities, exploring ways to develop a strong, positive identity and stay focused while overcoming struggles and pitfalls. Topics of discussion included independence, body image, goals, manners, leaders, and effective communication.

The All Girls Rock Conference is designed to provide Northwest Indiana girls, ages 9-18, with information allowing them to discover the specific skills, habits and approaches that are key to success and high achievement; to live powerfully their unique selves and to exhibit their talent always; to understand the qualities and characteristics of true leadership; and to realize that their community is stronger when they conduct themselves with poise, grace, dignity, compassion and courage.

Cheryl Smith, who is a member of the F.A.C.E.S. (Family and Community

Engagement Specialist) team at the Merrillville Community School Corporation, is the founder and CEO of Feed My Sheep Resource Center, Inc., an organization whose primary mission is to be a vehicle that provides various initiatives to enhance social and self-sufficiency skills for the underserved population of all ages in the NWI Tri-City Area and the surrounding community.

Feed My Sheep Resource Center, Inc., sponsors various initiatives, such as the All Girls Rock Conference.

Ms. Smith started Feed My Sheep in December 2010. Her passion is to continue to develop various initiatives that will impact the entire NWI community and to be a beacon of light and hope for the current community and generations to come who will also benefit from what Feed My Sheep Resource Center, Inc. has to offer.

GO,
PIRATES!